

Henry Trail 1003

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

CHRIST-CHURCH, DUBLIN,

On the 7th of FEBRUARY, 1779.

BEFORE THE

INCORPORATED SOCIETY

in DUBLIN,

For Promoting

ENGLISH PROTESTANT SCHOOLS

in IRELAND.

Trail BY THE RIGHT REVEREND
JAMES Lord Bishop of Down and Connor.

Published at the Request of the SOCIETY.

Together with an Abstract and Continuation of the SOCIETY'S ACCOUNTS
and PROCEEDINGS, to the 1st. of November, 1778.



D U B L I N :

Printed by G. PERRIN, N^o 60, Fishamble-street, opposite Castle-street,
Printer to the SOCIETY, 1779.

DUBLIN, SUNDAY the 7th of February, 1779.

AT A GENERAL MEETING OF THE
INCORPORATED SOCIETY,

For promoting ENGLISH PROTESTANT SCHOOLS
In IRELAND.

ORDERED, on Motion



THAT the Thanks of the Society be given to the Right Reverend JAMES, Lord Bishop of Down and Connor, for his excellent and fuitable Sermon, preached this Day before this Society; and that His Lordship be desired to let the Society have a Copy thereof, in order for them to cause the same to be Printed and Published.

THO. GIBBONS, Secretary.



DANIEL, Chap. xii. ver. iii.

THEY THAT BE WISE, SHALL SHINE AS THE
BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT; AND
THEY THAT TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUS-
NESS, AS THE STARS FOR EVER AND EVER.

NOTHING can inspire a good Mind
with greater Satisfaction than this
Reflection; that the almighty Being
has graciously formed an essential
Connexion between Wisdom, Vir-
tue and Happiness. Were our Happiness to
depend upon Objects entirely out of our Power,
justly might we complain of the Hardship of
our Lot, and bend under the intolerable Load

B

of

of Life, without Comfort and without Hope ; lamenting and exclaiming ; *Wherefore, Lord, hast thou made all Men in vain !*

But the moral Arrangement of the Universe is not more expressive of divine Power and Wisdom, than of infinite Goodness. God has endowed the human Race with a Portion of his Perfections ; he has wonderfully adapted their Circumstances to the Cultivation of their various Powers ; has placed the Objects of their respective Faculties in a great Measure within their Reach ; has clearly pointed out the Method by which every Desire of the human Breast can receive its most perfect and most permanent Gratification ; has afforded every Assistance necessary to the Attainment of it ; and added a Variety of Motives and Encouragements, to sweeten the Labour of Life, and to soothe the Toil of wise and virtuous Exertions.

In short, by the divine Decree Virtue and Duty consist in the Cultivation and Perfection of our several Faculties ; and by the same Appointment the Cultivation and Perfection of these necessarily constitute our Happiness.

Both natural and revealed Religion unite in confirming this important, this comfortable
Doctrin

Doctrine. The Contemplation of the Nature and of the Providence of the divine Being strengthens and ascertains the pleasing Idea; and the Example of our blessed Saviour realizes it to our Imagination; and by cloathing Perfection with Humanity, exhibits it to our View as a practicable Object of Imitation.

In lifting up our Eyes to these divine Standards of Perfection, we must discern, we must feel, that Goodness is their prevailing Feature. Goodness is the essential Character of every Emanation, of every Expression of Divinity: Goodness indeed appears to animate and to adorn, to direct and to govern all the divine Operations.

Since then our Perfection and Happiness must consist in a Similitude to God our Father, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; we may readily perceive the true Principle of all our Duties here below, where our fellow Creatures are concerned. Benevolence must be the Source of all our social Offices.

After having formed in our own Hearts the Habits of Virtue and true Righteousness, Goodness will prompt us to extend their happy Influences;

ences; so that all Mankind, if possible, may participate of the inestimable Blessing.

In this Respect Goodness will always be its own Reward; for the Prospect of Virtue and of Happiness communicated, more completely gratifies all the tender Sensibilities of the Heart, than any other Satisfaction or Enjoyment whatsoever.

But to animate our Endeavours, and to win our Hearts more forcibly to this sweet *Labour of Love*; and to render our Wisdom and our Happiness in these pleasing Exertions of Benevolence still more conspicuous, God has graciously displayed to us a Felicity perfect, permanent, uninterrupted; for *they that be wise, shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.*

In Obedience then, my Brethern, to the Appointment by which I am directed on this Occasion to solicit your Patience and Attention, I shall endeavour, though with much Diffidence, to direct your Views to the Method the best calculated, as I imagine, for accomplishing the great and pious Design of promoting the Perfection

tion and Happiness of our Brethren and fellow Christians.

I. Unhappily the Empire of Ignorance and of Errour is wide and extensive : the first spiritual Want, therefore, of an human Creature seems to be Instruction : for that Reason the Culture of the Understanding must be a primary Object of Attention.

If the Understanding is dark through Ignorance; if warped by Prejudice, or perverted by Errour; in vain shall we look for Uniformity, Consistency, or Propriety of Conduct. Principles facilitate the Performance of Actions; Principles render them steady, regular and determinate.

The informed Mind acts from System, and therefore acts equally with Coolness and with Vigour. The Exertions of the Ignorant arise from mere Impulse; they are Expressions only of brutal Force; for which Reason they must be vague and capricious, irregular and impetuous. Rooted Ignorance too is always accompanied by Sourness and Obstinacy of Temper. It is a Stranger to Softness, to Candour, to Docility; it is inaccessible

cessible to Reason and Argument ; its genuine Offspring is Cruelty, Violence, and Malignity.

But the Mind enlightened by Instruction is gentle, pliable and open to Information ; it yields itself readily to the soft Arts of Persuasion ; and by its uniform Modesty and Candour in a manner courts Conviction and Improvement. A Mind in this State of Culture *is not easily puffed up* : when it begins to climb the Hill of Knowledge which at first bounds its Prospects, every Step it advances opens new Scenes, discovers new Objects still beyond its Reach ; and therefore every Accession of Knowledge is accompanied by an Increase of Humility.

What then can be more important, what can be a greater Expression of Kindness and Benevolence, than to loose the Bands of Ignorance, which fetter the Understanding ; to raise up the Mind bowed down by Errour and Prejudice ; to illuminate what was dark and gloomy ; and to restore to rational Creatures the lost or obliterated Image of their divine Creator ! This is indeed co-operating with God, and promoting the Purposes of his Gospel ; it is making a Beginning ; nay, it is making an essential Progress in *turning many to Righteousness* ; it is in Effect, in Imitation of our Saviour, *proclaiming Liberty*

to the Captives, and opening the Prison to them that are bound.

II. When once we have infused the Light of Truth, especially of religious and divine Truth, into the Understanding, we are not far from gaining Admission into the Heart and Affections; the Culture of which is the next Object of Attention and Duty.

Without Discipline, our Passions are violent and boisterous, and hearken to no Controul. Their Operations are always excessive; and therefore, even the most amiable of them, are apt gradually to degenerate into Crimes. What shall we say then of those which are naturally disagreeable and odious? What, in such Circumstances, may we imagine, will be the Exertions of Malice, of Envy, of Hatred, of Resentment? Must not they terminate in Maiming, in Murder, in every Species of Barbarity?

But when the Understanding, the Eye of the Soul, *the Candle of the Lord* in Man, is illuminated, the destructive Tendency of furious and unbridled Passion begins to be perceived; the Consequences of Actions become Objects of Attention;

tention; and the Impetuosity of blind Impulse is gradually mitigated and restrained.

Here then, with great Advantage, will commence the Discipline of the Heart: it will not now be callous and insensible; it will naturally soften and expand itself; it will receive Impressions of Duty and Obligation; it will arrange and methodize its Attachments to the various Objects which surround it; and learn to adapt its Feelings to their real Influence upon its Happiness.

This Progress will lead naturally and directly to the Formation of moral and religious Habits. *The Work of Righteousness* being thus begun, Love to God the Father and Governour of the Universe, Gratitude to Jesus Christ the Redeemer of the World, and Charity and *Good-will towards Men*, the very *Bond of Perfection* and of all Virtues, will become active and ruling Principles; will characterize and animate all its Emotions; will adorn and improve every Faculty it possesses.

Now what a noble, what a god-like Work is this, to be uniformly engaged in! To emancipate the Minds of our fellow Creatures from a
Tyranny

Tyranny still more enthralling and pernicious than that of Ignorance or Errour; to redeem them from a Slavery to their Passions and Appetites; to restore them to moral and religious Freedom; to invest them with the glorious Privilege of being Sons of God! This is indeed making God's *Kingdom come, and his Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

Christ's Kingdom, my Brethren, is a Kingdom of Truth and of Righteousness; it is not applicable only to certain Times and Seasons; to particular States of Society; or to peculiar Modes of Government: it is a Kingdom extensive, universal, stable, *that passeth not away.* Its Subjects are the Hearts and the Consciences of Men; and he that addeth to the happy Number; verily, *he shall shine as the Stars for ever and ever.*

III. One Thing is still wanting to the Perfection of our Faculties, as far as human Assistance is requisite. Man is a compounded Being, consisting of Body and Soul: and so intimately, so essentially are these connected together, that whatever affects the one, necessarily impresses the other.

C

If

If the Mind is disordered, the Body becomes incapable of performing its various Functions; it immediately begins to languish and decay. If the Body is afflicted, the Mind sympathizes, and sickens with the Sufferer; it loses, I may say, its elastic Force; it sinks into Languor; it can neither act with Vigour, nor rest with Satisfaction: all its Operations are feeble, and consequently ineffectual.

There must therefore be a Discipline for the Improvement of the Body, as well as for the Perfection of the Mind; that the whole Man may be sound, healthful and vigorous. Now this Discipline is Exercise and moderate Labour. Without Exercise, the Body loses its natural Strength and Activity; it becomes listless and torpid; and suddenly imbibes the infectious Principles of Disease and Dissolution; so that it is made to prey equally upon itself and upon the Soul.

Idleness indeed enervates the whole Man; it is the Bane of Health and of Vigour; it is the Bane even of Virtue and of Happiness; for it deprives us of that Power and Energy which enable us to resist the Introduction of vicious Habits: its natural Tendency is towards Debauchery and universal Depravity. Exercise, on
the

the contrary, gives a Spring to the Constitution, and adds an Alacrity and Spirit to all our Exertions.

But the most important and most useful Species of Exercise is that which we term Industry; that Exercise which has Arts and Manufactures for its immediate Objects. What an additional Source of Improvement this must be both to the Body and to the Mind, it is more easy to feel than to express.

It introduces and forms a Habit of thinking and of acting regularly, uniformly, systematically: for that Reason it enlarges the Understanding, and widens the Sphere of its Comprehension; it employs and animates the Imagination, and encreases its Power of Invention: and, as its Exertions are immediately connected with public Prosperity, it may really be considered as a School for social Virtue; it must therefore powerfully contribute to the Discipline and Improvement of the Heart and Affections.

He then, my Brethren, who studiously gives Encouragement to honest Labour and useful Industry, is a Friend to his Country and to Mankind; he is a Guardian of the Health, of the

Virtue, and of the Happiness of his fellow Creatures. Is he not therefore entitled to the Reward of those who, in the Prophet's Estimation, *are wise, and who turn many to Righteousness?* Yea, verily; and he shall have his Reward; for to him *the Work of Righteousness shall be Peace; and the Effect of Righteousness, Quietness and Assurance for ever.*

IV. And here let it be observed, that this moral Discipline and Improvement ought to commence at an early Period.

When Errour and Prejudice have taken fast Hold of the Understanding; when the Heart has been perverted by a long Series of vicious Indulgences; and when the Organs of the Body have contracted a Stiffness and Rigidity, from the Want of useful Exercise and of industrious Exertions; vainly shall we hope to succeed in our Endeavours to introduce Reformation or Improvement.

But in Childhood there are no stubborn Habits to contend with; no rivetted Opinions to obstruct or to retard Success. In Childhood there is a Frankness, a Candour, and a Simplicity truly amiable and engaging; there is a Susceptibility
of

of Impressions, and a Pliability of Organs that greatly facilitate the Introduction of new Habits.

Thus, Truth, Virtue and Religion will be established; and will be rendered familiar and habitual to the tender and unprejudiced Mind. Righteousness and Truth will here *kiss each other*, and become the governing Principles of Action through the Remainder of Life. So that, *train up a Child in the Way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

These Reflections, my Brethren, united together exhibit to us the whole Extent of our Duty towards our fellow Creatures. And so great, so unspeakably great, are the Encouragements with which our holy Religion prompts our Ambition, and animates our Hopes; that, I trust, it will be our constant, our unwearied Study, to fulfill the Purposes of Heaven, and to extend the blessed Influences of Christ's Kingdom.

I need not suggest to any one here present, that the Method which I have endeavoured to recommend for this noble and salutary Purpose, is no idle Scheme, no airy Work of Fancy framed at a Venture, without Foundation and without Trial. No; it is really a Matter of Fact and
Expe-

Experience. I have done Nothing more than just to give you a short and simple Sketch of the meritorious Conduct and of the pious Labours of the worthy Society, whom I now have the Honour of addressing: Labours founded on Propriety, on Religion, and on brotherly Love; Labours continued through a Series of Years, with a Zeal uniform and unremitted.

The Success with which these Labours have hitherto been accompanied, though indeed unequal completely to satisfy Desire, yet has been such as justly to cherish Hope, and to encourage Perseverance. Surely then, my Brethren, I shall be justified, if I recommend this extensive *Work of Righteousness*, with all the Earnestness and Energy in my Power.

How melancholy, in many Respects, is the State of our unhappy Country! Its Inhabitants divided in political and in religious Opinion; and estranged still more fatally from each other in Sentiment and Affection! How sunk are we in Ignorance; and therefore how feeble in Improvement! a Ray of Knowledge hardly glimmers in our Land, except where Arts and Manufactures have been long encouraged; and how circumscribed is that small Spot, in Comparison
of

of the dreary and extensive Waste, that still remains a Stranger to Industry and to Instruction! The natural Consequence of this is a Ferocity in Manners, and a Brutality in Crimes, not to be paralleled in any civilized Nation in Europe.

A Dawn of Hope indeed has lately arisen, that the Commerce of this Kingdom will soon be considerably extended. Commerce necessarily enlightens the Minds of Men: it creates indeed artificial Wants; but it excites a Spirit of Industry; it dispels that Gloom and Sourness of Temper which is fostered by Ignorance and Idleness; it softens, polishes, and refines the Behaviour; and unites the Hearts of Men in loyal Attachment to that State and Government, under which their Interests flourish.

Would our Brethren of Great-Britain view this Subject impartially, they must soon be convinced, that they would draw additional Riches, Stability and Strength from our Industry and Success: they would therefore be inclined, in this Respect, to gratify our most sanguine Wishes. Happy be the Omen to the Improvement both of the Manners and the Soil of this Country!

Till

Till this new Source of national Prosperity is opened, we must bewail the Barbarity that so hideously deforms too many of our Country-men. Let not, however, our Horror at Offences so atrocious, extinguish; let it rather encrease our Compassion for the unhappy Offenders: let it incite us to double our Affiduity and Zeal in removing the fatal Cause of such Enormities: let it prompt us to sow the kindly Seeds of Truth, of Righteousness, and of Industry, wherever our Influence extends.

With what Pleasure would it then inspire us, to be able to say with the great Prophet; *They that erred in Spirit, shall know Understanding; and they that murmured, shall learn Doctrine. The People that walked in Darknes have seen a great Light; they that dwell in the Land of the Shadow of Death, upon them hath the Light shined.*

These Observations, my Brethren, regard principally our Popish fellow Christians of this Kingdom. How sincerely, how affectionately, do I lament their civil Degeneracy; their religious Delusion! How should it *repent us for our Brother!* How feelingly should we cry out; *O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass, that there*

there should be to Day one Tribe lacking in Israel.

The Information, the Improvement, and the Happiness of this *lacking Tribe* of our Brethren have been the peculiar Objects of the Institution of our Charter-Schools; and these have proved a most beneficial Nursery to true Religion and to civil Virtues; for to them we owe a Number of rational Christians, and of industrious Citizens.

Encouraged by this Success, ought we not to use every Effort, to strain every Nerve, in order to extend the happy Consequences of so wise and so humane an Establishment? Ought we not to proceed in *the Work of the Lord*; to redeem our Popish Brethren and fellow Subjects from Poverty, from Rags, from Ignorance, from Idleness, from moral and from religious Slavery?

By such engaging Expressions of Benevolence and Humanity, may we not hope at length to conquer their Aversion to Knowledge, to Labour, and to Industry? To conquer their Prejudices, their Animosties, their Resentments against ourselves? To conquer their Hearts as well as their Understandings; and to unite them with ours in mutual Love

D

and

and brotherly Affection? Were this to be the Effect of our public Establishments; could this be obtained by our private Labours in *turning* our Brethren to *Righteousness*; Good God! how flourishing, how happy would be the Condition of this ill-fated Country?

With a View, we may imagine, to this desirable End, a Law was lately framed for the Relief of the Roman Catholics of this Kingdom. It is certainly the Duty of a good Subject to acquiesce in the Determination of the Legislature of his Country: and God grant that the Consequences of this Law may even exceed the fond Hopes of its warmest Advocates! Yet after an Alteration in our Constitution so sudden and so important, can we, in this Time of Trouble and public Confusion, can we look forward to the dark and doubtful Transactions of succeeding Years, without anxious Concern, without the most painful Apprehensions?

But, whatever may be the interesting Event, undoubtedly the unexpected Indulgence ought to soften the Minds, and excite the Gratitude of our Popish Brethren: it ought to confirm and perpetuate Loyalty to their King, and Attachment to their Country; and if it cannot extinguish

tinguish religious Prejudices; surely it ought to kill the Seeds of civil Discontent, and of political Resentment.

Till that happy Day shines upon our Church and our State, when all Ranks and Denominations shall learn to preserve *Unity of Spirit, in the Bond of Peace*; let us be strenuous in our Endeavours; let us do every Thing in our Power, to strengthen the Hands, and sweeten the Labours of this benevolent and respectable Society, who have already wrought great Salvation in this our *Israel*.

Consider, I beseech you, the Importance and the Magnitude of the Object. It requires great and constant Resources; and yet many of these are casual and precarious. I solicit your Countenance, your Protection, your Charity, with Confidence; knowing that the humane Institution is worthy and meritorious; knowing too the Zeal, the Abilities, the Wisdom, and the Integrity of those who direct its Concerns.

Every Class of Men, whatever may be the Nature of their respective Talents, may powerfully and effectually contribute to this generous Plan of *turning many to Righteousness*. Your
Abilities,

Abilities, my Brethren, your Influence, your Wealth, your Labour, will all happily conspire to the Accomplishment of this great Work of Reformation.

Remember, that it is Goodness that stamps a Value upon every Blessing, either of Body, of Mind, or of Fortune. Goodness alone sanctifies Riches, Honours, Rank, or Abilities. Without Goodness, the Things we possess can bestow neither Happiness nor Enjoyment.

Allow me then to suggest to your Imagination, what a Stream of pure Pleasures will sweeten every Year, every Day, nay, every Hour you have to live; if by your Piety and Humanity, if by your benevolent Labours in Favour of this important Object of national Attention, Poverty and Wretchedness have been relieved; Arts and Manufactures promoted; sound Knowledge extended; Virtue and Religion encouraged; public and private Happiness communicated; the Blessings of Christianity rendered more universal; the Prejudices of Popery diminished; its Resentments obliterated; public Peace and Harmony established: in short, if Christ's Kingdom upon Earth has been enlarged; and the Inhabitants of Heaven multiplied.

To

To relinquish a few, a very few, of the splendid, but unmeaning Luxuries and Superfluities of Life; and to exchange them for such a Train of national Blessings; how small would be the Sacrifice! How cheap the Purchase!

We use not the Arts of Eloquence to excite immediate Compassion; we avail not ourselves of a sudden and unguarded Impulse, in order to extort your Charity: that would be a very feeble and uncertain Foundation to build our Expectations upon. No; we leave you, my Brethren, to your calm, your serious, your deliberate Reflexions; well knowing that uniform and permanent Habits alone constitute the Virtue of Men, and the Charity of Christians.

Upon these we rest all our Hopes of Success: and I sincerely pray that, through them, *the Lord God may cause Righteousness and Praise to spring forth before all the Nations!* That he may make you *stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord;* so that in the next World you may *shine as the Brightness of the Firmament; and as the Stars for ever and ever.*

E

That

That these glorious Purposes may effectually be obtained, let me call upon you, my Brethren, to join with me in this excellent Collect of our Church:

O merciful God, who hast made all Men, and hatest Nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live; have Mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels and Heretics, and take from them all Ignorance, Hardness of Heart, and Contempt of thy Word: and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy Flock, that they may be saved among the Remnant of the true Israelites; and be made one Fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the holy Spirit, one God, World without End. Amen.

6 JY 53

T H E E N D.